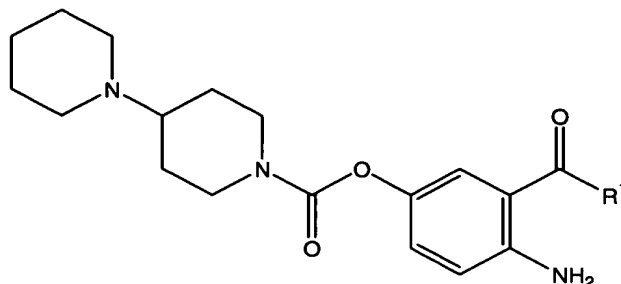


## ABSTRACT

Novel compounds are provided having the formula



and salts thereof, where  $R^1$  is hydrogen, an alkyl, aralkyl, hydroxymethyl, carboxymethyl, acyloxymethyl or trialkylsilyl group, or a group  $-CH_2NR^3R^4$  where N is a linking nitrogen atom and where (a)  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  are independently selected from hydrogen and alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl and alkoxyalkyl groups; (b)  $R^3$  is hydrogen or an alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl or alkoxyalkyl group, and  $R^4$  is  $-COR^5$  where  $R^5$  is hydrogen or an alkyl, alkenyl, hydroxyalkyl or alkoxyalkyl group; or (c)  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  taken together with the linking nitrogen atom form a saturated 3- to 7-member heterocyclic group. These compounds are useful intermediates in a process to prepare camptothecin derivatives including the anti-cancer drug irinotecan.